



LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES

January 13, 2010

BOARD PRESENT: Art Brodsky, Richard Bryant, Paulette Dickerson, Althea Grey-McKenzie, Kay Kim, Jill Lewis, Otto Lewis, Lois Neuman, Frank Riccardi

STAFF PRESENT: B. Parker Hamilton, Director; Eric Carzon, Business Manager; Carol Legarreta, Public Services Administrator – Branch Operations; Michele Sellars – Public Services Administrator – Community Engagement and Outreach; Regina Holyfield-Jewett, Recording Secretary

The Library Board meeting was convened by Chair Brodsky at 7:05 p.m.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Minutes from the December 9, 2009 meeting were approved with corrections.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

David Chiles is in the hospital; he is doing well. Chair Brodsky will check on him tomorrow.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Director Hamilton introduced attending staff: Carol Legarreta, Public Services Administrator for Branch Operations; Michele Sellars, Public Services Administrator for Community Engagement and Outreach; and Eric Carzon, Business Manager.

The Board members introduced themselves to staff.

Director Hamilton updated the Board on the **FY10 Savings Plan, Round 2** and informed them as to the recommendations MCPL is contemplating for the **FY11 Savings Plan**, giving the members an opportunity to provide feedback.

The current FY10 budget has been reduced by 7.1%. The budget began at 37.5 M and is currently down to 34.8M. Looking at other County departments, the only other department that has taken a greater reduction than Libraries is the Office of the County Attorney. Public Libraries is the only front line department that has taken such a huge hit. Most departments have taken a reduction of

approximately 5.1%. Libraries was asked, as was other departments, during the first FY10 Savings Plan reduction to take a 2.9% cut. After an additional \$750K was taken from the Libraries materials budget, that made the reduction 4.2%.

Mr. Leggett has recommended the FY10 Savings Plan, Round 2 to the County Council. Libraries goes before the Health and Human Services Committee of the Council on January 25 at 9:30 a.m. There will be other departments on the schedule, so Libraries could be later than 9:30 a.m.

Before Council will be the FY10 Savings Plan, Round 2 recommendations of the County Executive based on the recommendations presented to him by Libraries.

- An additional cut to the materials budget of \$698K which takes the base down to \$3.4M.
- A reduction in substitute staffing of approximately 20% which equals about \$112K.
- No staffing of the information desks on Sundays. If someone goes into the libraries on Sundays, there will be no one at the Information Desks. To help with this transition, there will be staff at Ask-A-Librarian. There will be signage in the branches directing customers to a telephone or either to connect through email, online chat or return the next day for assistance.
- A reduction in force with a loss of six positions. Most of these positions come from the Collections Unit because the work there has been reduced, and also from a reduction of staff in the Central Office. All the positions are filled except one. In addition to that, a recommendation has been made to reduce approximately \$151K in furniture, information technology, training, mileage, and advertising for jobs, for a total of \$1.79M.

These will be the items that Council will be asking questions about on January 25 before they make their final approval. Once final approval is made, the reduction in force will probably occur in April; employees have to be notified. The Sunday model may take place sooner than that, in hopes to save \$100K; the sooner it begins, the quicker the money will be saved. The substitute staffing reduction will probably go in sooner as well. The impact to the substitute staffing reduction is that there will be longer lines in the branches, and there's a great possibility that you will find no one at the information desk even during the week. The doors will remain open if even there is no one staffing the information desks. The core service will be circulation service.

Question: What can County Council do? Can they take even more money from the budget?

Answer: That is possible. During the FY10 Savings Plan, Round 1, before Council, there was no discussion. Council stated that it was with regret that they were accepting the recommendations. The same response is anticipated for this round.

Information was received that a savings plan was needed for FY11 with a target of 14.9% (\$5M). The recommendations for this savings plan are due to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on Friday, January 15, 2010. MCPL's revised budget for FY11 is \$29.680M.

Four years ago, the budget was around \$40M. Going to \$29M takes MCPL out of a certain peer group, which includes systems with budgets of \$30M and above. As a County with one million residents and twenty-one branches, being below \$30M is not good.

Question: How does this [MCPL's budget] compare to Fairfax County?

Answer: Fairfax County is in worse shape than Montgomery County. They began with a higher budget, but the percentage cuts have been higher. Their materials budget has been cut by half; they have already laid off about one hundred staff members; they have reduced hours while serving 100,000 more customers. They received a notice to cut an additional 15%.

Recommendations for the FY11 Savings Plan were presented to the Board by Eric Carzon. The recommendations were presented to receive feedback from the Board. After discussion, Board members were in agreement that the savings plan presented was a reasonable, well thought out plan that meets the crisis.

Chair Brodsky asked that members send talking points regarding the budget to him via email. He will compile the talking points and send them to Board and LAC members. The talking points from last year are on the Library Board's webpage. It was noted that Damascus LAC did a fantastic job at the County Executive's budget forum in their area.

There has been an enormous increase in **holds** over the past few years. The processing of holds tends to drive MCPL's business. The holds report that is run every morning for each branch is approximately 40 pages long, with 25-28 titles per page. An action has to be taken on every line item on the report each day. An expired holds report is run daily by staff; the materials that have not been picked up are rechecked in and returned to the shelves. A customer may place up to 35 items on hold at one time; MCPL would like to decrease this to 15 items. Of the approximately 800,000 books that are placed on hold, 12-15%, are not picked up.

Director Hamilton asked the Board to consider creating a **\$1.00 fine** that would be levied on those customers who place items on hold and do not pick them up or cancel the request (which can be done online) in the allotted seven days. By imposing a non-pickup fine on holds, Libraries hopes the customers will take the process more seriously. The software program would cost \$2,100; this is a one time fee.

If created by the Board, Eric Carzon will ascertain the process for approval by the County of the fine. Upon approval by the County, Michele Sellars will put into place a marketing campaign that will help communicate this information to the public via the *Gazette*, talking points for staff, MCPL's website, etc.

Chair Brodsky proposed a motion that the Library Board endorse the proposal put forward by the Library Director to implement a fine for holds that are not picked up or cancelled. The motion was seconded by Jill Lewis. The Board members voted unanimously in favor of this motion.

The County Executive will unveil his **Capital Improvements Program (CIP) budget** for fiscal years 2011 to 2016 on Friday, January 15, 2010, 11:00 a.m at Paint Branch High School on Old Columbia Pike in Burtonsville. Library projects in this program are Gaithersburg, Olney, Davis, Potomac, Silver Spring and Clarksburg.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:

LAC Achievement Awards Subcommittee

Althea Grey-McKenzie gave a brief overview of the LAC Achievement Awards. The purpose of the Achievement Awards is to publicly recognize and honor innovative projects and activities or

special achievements by Library Advisory Committees. The Achievement Awards are intended to inspire LACs to become more active and innovative in working on projects to benefit their libraries and communities, to acknowledge and encourage their colleagues, and to encourage LAC innovation and initiative throughout the County. The Achievement Awards are approved by the Library Board membership and are presented at the annual joint meeting of the Board and LACs.

There are five awards:

LAC Membership Award - presented to the LAC which demonstrates effective member recruitment and retention methods.

Renaissance Award - presented to the LAC which emerged after a period of difficulty or transition.

Member(s) of the Year Award – presented to the outstanding member(s) of LACs for their work during the year.

Library Board Liaison's Award – presented to the individual(s) and their LACs who exemplify the ideal Liaison relationship.

Eleanor Ablard Award – presented to the LAC with the most effective program linking the LAC, the library and its community of users.

Last year there were four winners: LAC Membership Award – Damascus LAC; LAC Member of the Year Award - Margaret Nightingale, Poolesville LAC; LAC Member of the Year Award - Poolesville LAC; Eleanor Ablard Award - Poolesville LAC.

Ms. Grey-McKenzie stated that during the Aspen Hill LAC meeting, members voiced being discouraged that none of their nominations won awards. She assured them that the evaluation process was very fair.

It was suggested that the subcommittee compile the entries and the entire Board vote. It was also suggested that the process be streamlined to encourage more entries. It would also be useful to have examples of past entries attached to the applications. It is important that those nominating read the guidelines for each award.

More subcommittee members are needed. Current members are Kay Kim, Jill Lewis and Althea Grey-McKenzie.

The subcommittee will go through the application and nail down all the essential items. They will review the process by email and bring their recommendations back to the Board.

The deadline for submissions is April 1, 2010.

Legislative and Public Affairs Subcommittee

Otto Lewis asked if the Board should meet with the Councilmembers before or after the budget hearings. It was noted that the Board agreed during a previous meeting to meet with the Councilmembers throughout the year. The Board will act collectively to meet with Councilmembers; they will begin meeting first with the Health and Human Services Committee. The meetings should take place after the County Executive has submitted the recommendations to Council.

Chair Brodsky said the message to Council should be that their support is appreciated. Libraries has taken a greater cut than most departments. The materials budget cannot be cut any lower; that money is needed to keep accurate materials. Our vulnerable residents who cannot afford to go to Borders to purchase materials must be kept in mind as well as children who use libraries to learn and others who use library resources to look for jobs.

The talking points will be pulled together and Otto Lewis will set up dates to meet with Councilmembers.

LAC BUSINESS:

LAC Handbook

Chair Brodsky replaced all mentions of the word “advocacy” in the LAC Handbook, and forwarded it to Connie Latham for review.

Annual Meeting

Lois Neuman will assist in planning this year’s meeting. Chair Brodsky made some suggestions for meeting topics which included the book scanning movement, e-books, presentation on storyville and a forum on the status of MCPL. The County Executive will be invited.

LAC Updates

Gaithersburg and CRC LAC liaison reports were submitted electronically by Paulette Dickerson.

On 4 January 2010 **Gaithersburg LAC** met. The next meeting date is 1 February 2010.

The Gaithersburg Library Manager, Linda Gimourginas, gave out information about MC311 and discussed the project fact sheet with the group. She informed the LAC about a delay in the roll out of the new Circ system. There was discussion about the receipt printing system, telephone renewal and the next MCPL Strategic Plan as well.

Most of the meeting was taken up with information, issues and concerns related to the Gaithersburg Library renovation and the budget cuts that may affect MCPL. Shelving has been ordered; the 75% submission point has been reached so bids for the job may follow soon. The renovation process is still on schedule to begin in April.

The English Conversation Club still has no place to meet in the interim and the LAC continues to be concerned for them.

The LAC would like to find an interim meeting place.

Questions for the Board:

Is there a way to reprogram the menu for the telephone system at the Branch so that patrons can skip the pre-recorded stuff and get straight to a staff person?

The telephone renewal “voice” is awful; when can it be redone?

How can LACs find out information sooner? Is there a way they can be more a part of the process?

On 11 January 2010 **CRC LAC** met. Paulette Dickerson was unable to attend. The next meeting date is not yet scheduled.

The **Silver Spring LAC** is looking for groups who can help with the support for the pedestrian bridge. As an individual effort, one LAC member would go forward with a lawsuit in support of the bridge.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

B. Parker Hamilton